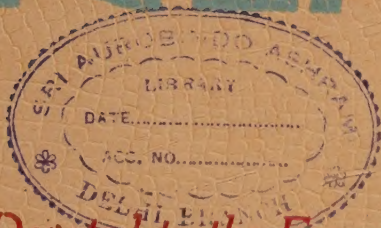


THE ADVENT

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*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of
Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*



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COMPLIMENTARY



The Advent

If you want to have knowledge or see all as brothers or have peace, you must think less of yourself, your desires, feelings, peoples' treatment of you, and think more of the Divine—living for the Divine, not for yourself.

SRI AUROBINDO



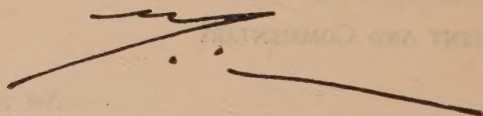
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If we take the human body as the tabernacle of the Lord, then the medical science becomes the ritual of the worship and the doctors are the priests officiating in the temple. Thus the medical career is a sacerdotaly and must be treated as such.





THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves
without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine.
For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss,
the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge,
the seas of Ananda. - - - Sri Aurobindo.

EDITORIALS*

THE DIVINE NOT FOREIGN

*Why does the Divine want to manifest Himself upon the earth
into this chaos ?*

Because it is for that reason He has created the earth, not
for any other reason.

The earth is Himself but deformed. He wishes to put it
back again in its truth. The earth is not something separate
and foreign to Him. It is only a deformation of Him which has
to become what it is originally and in its essence, that is to say,
the Divine.

* Based on the Mother's Talks

Then why is the Divine foreign to us ?

He is not foreign, my child. You imagine that He is foreign, but He is not so in the least. He is the very essence of your being, not at all foreign. You may be ignorant of Him, but He is not foreign. Without the Divine you would not exist, you would not exist even for the millionth part of a second. Only you live in a kind of false illusion and deformation, you are not conscious. You are not conscious of yourself, you are conscious of something which you believe you are, but which you are not.

Then what am I ?

The Divine.

THE REVERSAL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

You can make a revolution in your consciousness in a quarter of a second; that may take years also, centuries even, even many lives.

But it can be done in a second. And when there is this revolution, this reversal of the inner consciousness, in a second everything changes. You are astounded to see yourself capable of thinking that what you are, what you consider to be yourself is not true, the truth of your being is something you do not know.

There comes a moment in your life when the feeling or the perception that you have of yourself, of being yourself begins to fade and becomes foreign and unreal. And the question rises inevitably, "What then is this I ?" Yes, a moment comes when the question arises with such acuteness and intensity that as a result of this intensity of concentration there happens a reversal of consciousness; and then instead of being on this side, you find yourself on the other side, and everything becomes so simple : you understand, you know, you are, you exist, you see clearly the unreality of the other thing.

You may have to wait for the moment, I say, you may have to wait for days, months, centuries, lives. But if the aspiration becomes intense, there comes a moment when the pressure is so great and the intensity so strong that something is overturned in the consciousness and you have absolutely the impression that instead of being here, you are there, instead of seeing from outside and trying to look into the inside, you are inside. And when you are thus inside, that very moment everything is changed thoroughly, and what appeared to you true, natural, normal, real, tangible, all that appears to you now grotesque, funny, unreal, quite absurd. For one has touched something which is supremely true, eternally beautiful, and that is never lost again. When the reversal has been accomplished, you can slide down towards the external consciousness in order not to lose contact with the things of life, but the other thing holds, it does not move. When you have to deal with the things of the world, you may just fall back a little into their blindness and ignorance, but always you have within you something that is ever living, something up awake, that never flinches, and when that succeeds in entering and pervading everything, then it is done, the blindness vanishes for ever. And it is an experience absolutely tangible, it is more concrete than anything concrete, more concrete than a blow that you may receive on your head. That is why when people ask me how one can know if he is in contact with his psychic, whether he has found the Divine, I am inclined to laugh; for when the thing happens, one knows it, it is done with and there is no more question about it.

If you fall back into your old nature, it means that there is a division in your nature, there is a part in your being which has refused to move on along with the rest. There is a part that has progressed and there is a part that holds out and does not want to stir : you feel that something in you wants obstinately to remain what it is. It is because you have left behind a luggage on your way instead of carrying it with you; it pulls you and you have to turn back to pick it up. That makes you lose time, you lose much

time in this way unfortunately. It is because you are blind to so many things in you. You do not want to see, because it is not a pretty thing to see and one prefers to ignore it. However, if you ignore, it does not mean that it exists no more. You wish conveniently to lay it by on your way and try to walk on; but it is tied to you with a tether, as it were, and it drags you behind one day or another. So it is better to face it bravely as soon as possible and tell it that that too must get along with the rest. It does not serve any purpose to play the ostrich. You close your eyes and do not want to see this defect or difficulty or this ignorance or this stupidity and turn aside. Still it remains there. And one day you will have to come face to face with it. You will have to take it into account and deal with it. If you do not, you may feel you are progressing, you are nearing the goal, but you will never reach it, it will be always receding and eluding you. One day you will have to make a clean sweep of all that, burn your boats. Otherwise you move in a circle, you spend your whole life in making only bits of progress, now here, now there. People in their ordinary life take birth, live, die, are born again and die again; that continues indefinitely and there is no problem before them. But once you have a taste, the foretaste of what true life is, one understands a little why one is here and what one has to do here and, besides, once you have made some effort to realise the ideal, then there is no meaning in not doing the thing thoroughly. There is no meaning in putting off the thing till another time. It is better to do it when you are given the chance of doing it consciously and immediately, upon earth, in this life. The occasion, the opportunity is there now; you may not have another like it in thousands of years. Better to do the work immediately, cost what it may, without losing time.

Each time you fear to look back and try to hide carefully from yourself the thing that prevents you from going forward, it is as if you raise a wall on your way and then you will have to pull it down. It is much better to finish with the job immediately. Never try to put a coating of sugar around the

bitter pill. Certainly they are bitter, all the weaknesses, the uglinesses, the small nasty things in you—they are a good number. You are just nearing a realisation, on the point of touching a light, coming to an illumination, just then, all on a sudden something pulls you back from behind and you feel you are out of breath, you cannot advance any more, you are at a deadstop. Many in this situation do nothing but weep, lament and pity their poor self. But all that is ridiculous. Instead, look into yourself with calmness and firmness, ask yourself, what is there still of littleness, meanness, stupidity, vanity, ignorance, bad will hiding in one corner that stops you from crossing the threshold, the threshold of the new discovery. Ask yourself, “what is there in me, the small, tiny, obstinate thing, lurking like a worm within the fruit and which I do not see ?” If you are sincere, you will find it. But the temptation is to avoid it, to sugar-coat it. Sugar-coating means mental explanation ; the mind advances specious reasons and endeavours to explain away the difficulty, mollifying it, justifying it, putting it by. But that is, as I say, letting the canker lie comfortably within the heart of the fruit.

HEAVENLY ARCHETYPE

Every object that is manifested physically was at first conceived somewhere else before it has been realised here on the material plane.

There is a whole world of what are called makers of form. All conceptions are made there. This is a world very high, higher than the mental worlds. From there formations, creations, types conceived by the form-builders descend and then are moulded into physical realities. There is always a gap between the perfect conception and its materialisation. Very often the materialised form is no more than a caricature of the original conception. The original forms are the archetype ; they are in what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind.

But there is a still higher world, where the origins are still

purser. It contains the original, the supreme origins of things embodied upon earth. Thus you can take note of and compare the different levels and see what a deformation earthly creation is. It is only when you have reached these remote heights, found things in their essence that you can work consciously for transformation here; otherwise what else could be the basis of your conception of a better, more perfect, more beautiful world than the present one? If we do not have that, our only recourse is our imagination which is a very poor, a very material instrument. It is only when you get into the consciousness of those highest creative worlds that your consciousness is capable of working so that material objects may take their true forms.

COMMENT AND COMMENTARY

“There are other great Personalities of the Divine Mother, but they were more difficult to bring down...most of all one who is her Personality of that mysterious and powerful ecstasy and Ananda....”

SRI AUROBINDO: *The Mother*

“What is this personality and when will she manifest?”

She came bringing with her a splendour of power and love, an intensity of divine delight till then unknown to earth. The physical atmosphere changed altogether, surcharged with new and wonderful possibilities.

But for her to establish herself here and act here, she needed to find a minimum receptivity, find at least one human being having the requisite vital and physical qualities, some super-Parsifal as it were, endowed with a spontaneous and integral purity, at the same time, possessing a body sufficiently firm and balanced to be capable of holding, without faltering, the intensity of the Ananda that she was bringing.

Till now she has not obtained what was necessary. Men obstinately continue to remain men and do not want or are not able to become supermen. They cannot receive and express

a love that is not of their stature. They know only human love ! And the marvellous delight of Divine Ananda escapes their perception.

Therefore she thinks at times to withdraw, seeing that the world is not yet ready to receive her. And it would be a cruel loss ! It is true that for the moment her presence is more nominal than active, since she has no occasion to manifest herself. Even so, she is a powerful aid to the work. For, of all the aspects of the Mother, she has the greatest power for bodily transformation. Indeed the body cells that can vibrate in contact with the divine delight, receive it and hold it are the regenerated cells on the way to becoming immortal. But the vibrations of the divine delight and the vibrations of pleasure cannot dwell together in the same vital and physical system. One must have totally renounced feeling any pleasure before one can be in a condition to receive the Ananda. But very few are those who can give up pleasure, without, by that very fact, giving up all participation in active life and plunging into a rigorous asceticism. And among those who know that it is in the active life that transformation must take place, there are some who take pleasure in one form, although somewhat devious, of Ananda and thus justify in themselves the search for personal satisfaction, creating in them an unsurmountable obstacle to their own transformation....

You can however always try. The world creates itself anew every minute. You can recreate a new world this very minute, if you knew how to create it — if you knew how to change your own nature !

I did not say that she has departed. I said that sometimes she thought of departing.

She came down, because there was a possibility, because things had reached a certain point and the moment had come when she could come down. And she did come down, for I thought that the thing was possible and she might succeed. The possibility is still there.

August 25, 1954

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

POEMS

(I)

ONE

THE mind of a man
And the mind in a stone.
But the Mind of minds
Sits bright and alone.

The life of a tree,
The life in a clod,
To the Life of all life
That men call God.

The heart of a beast
And a seraph's heart, —
But the Heart of all hearts
Throbs ever apart.

A body beloved
And a body slain.
Yet both were the bodies
Of One in their pain.

SRI AUROBINDO

(II)

IN a mounting as of sea-tides, in a rippling as of invisible
waters,

On a cry in me my soul is uplifted, in a passion of my nature
My heart climbs up towards thee, O unimaginable Wonder and
Resplendence,

In its¹ striving for the caress of thy Light and for the embrace of
thy Presence.

If once given were but a touch of thy feet on the thrilled bosom
of my longing;

But a glance of thy eyes mingling with mine in the recesses and
the silence,

Such a rapture would envelop me, such a fire of transfiguring
effulgence,

I could never again be as a man upon this earth, but one
immortal.

For my mind would be dissolved in a sun-glory of God-vision
and of knowledge,

And my heart would be made suddenly more pure and determined
and self-tranquil,

And my nerves and my body would transmute into an ethereal
divineness,

A fit vesture for the godhead thou buildest in me, for the
immortal thy adorer.

O thou Life of my life and the unseen heart of its ecstasy and its
beating,

O Face that was disclosed in the beginning of the worlds and
the immenseness,

Let thy Flame-wisdom leap down upon the coilings of our
python inconscience,

Let the Love-wine be poured out in Thy chalice, let me be
drunk with it for ever.

¹ a

I shall meet thee in the ocean of thy stillness, in the ether of thy
splendour,
Thy Force shall be in my veins like the ichor in the Unaging
who are deathless;
My soul shall be as one breath with thy soul and thy infinity
around thee,
And shall quiver into the vision of thy beauty and the marvel of
thy sweetness.

SRI AUROBINDO

(III)

SOUL, my soul, reascend over the edge of life, —
Far, far from the din burn into tranquil skies,
Cross bright ranges of mind measureless, visioned, white;
Thoughts sail down as if ships carrying bales of light;
Truth's form robes by the Seers woven from spirit threads,
From wide havens where luminous argosies,
Gold-robed Wisdom's divine traffic and merchandise
But there pause not but go far beyond
Where thy natural home motionless vast and mute
Waits thy tread; on a throne facing infinity
Thought-nude, void of the world, one with the silence be.
Sole, self poised and unmoved thou shalt behold below
Hierarchies and domains, godheads and potencies,
Titans, demons and men each in his cosmic role;
Midst all these in the lone centre of forces spun
Fate there under thy feet turning the wheels of Time
The World Law thou shalt know¹ mapped in its codes sublime,
Yet thyself shalt remain viewless, eternal, free.

SRI AUROBINDO

¹ view

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

IF ego-sense comes back upon you so strongly, it must be because something in you admits it. The Mother's force is there always and can help to get rid of these things, but you on your part must with faith and sincerity accept the Mother and put yourself entirely on her side so as to make it possible for the force to work with effect. When bad thoughts come, you must reject them, not assent to them in your mind, not give voice to them in your speech, not believe in them or their suggestions. These things cannot vanish in a day, but if you do like that, they will diminish and lose their power to lay strong hold of you and disturb you, and in the end they will disappear.

21-4-1932

*
**

To make your sadhana depend upon not eating is to make a great mistake. When people feel like that, they get into an abnormal condition and easily mistake imaginations and delusions for true experiences. Much fasting in the end weakens the nervous system. So you must drop this habit of not eating for days together. For yoga it is a mistake to eat too much but a mistake also to eat nothing or too little. If you eat too much, you become heavy and tamasic; if you fast or eat too little, you excite the vital energies and finally overexcite them, but at the same time you weaken the body and the nerves; both are bad for sadhana. You should eat regularly a moderate but sufficient amount of food; it is only if there is illness or disturbance of digestion that a low diet or not eating sometimes becomes necessary, but fasting even for the purpose of resting the stomach should not last more than a day.

For your sadhana you have to use, not outward means like this, but quietness, sincere peaceful aspiration, openness to the Mother.

December, 1932

*
**

I must ask you to remember what I told you about sadhana. If you want to do the sadhana here, you must sleep well and eat well. If you try to stop sleeping or eating or unduly diminish sleep and food, you will weaken the body and excite the vital and wrong and excited and exaggerated movements will come into you. Remember this in future.

26-1-1933

*
**

Each has his own way and movement in the sadhana. All do not see visions and lights — these are helpful but to get the surrender and the change of the nature is the most important.

July, 1933

*
**

If there is the full surrender in the work and you feel it is the Mother's and that the Mother's force is working in you, then fatigue does not come.

July, 1933

*
**

The Mother's not putting her hand on the head of a sadhak means nothing at all except that the Mother is absorbed or in

trance. It happens sometimes to the best sadhaks with whom the Mother is most satisfied — it does not at all mean that Mother is displeased or that there is anything wrong with the sadhak.

June, 1933

*
**

It is rather late in the day to ask such questions. Yoga is union with the Divine, sadhana is what you do in order to unite with the Divine. You have to get away from the ordinary human consciousness and get into touch with the divine consciousness.

For that call always on the Mother, open yourself to her, aspire and pray for her Force to work in you so as to make you fit—reject desire, restlessness, disturbances of the mind and vital. Dhyana means to make the mind and vital quiet and concentrate in aspiration for the Mother's Peace, the Mother's Presence, her Light, Force and Ananda.

10-10-1933

*
**

When the sadhaks write to the Mother, it is not to get answers from her about the small things of daily life—sometimes they do it when necessary and Mother sometimes answers, sometimes not. The main object of writing is to put themselves before the Mother, their experiences, their progress, their lives, so as to create a constant connection and invite her presence, force, help, guidance in every thing that calls for her intervention. But it is not necessary that the Mother's response should take the form of a written answer. It would not even be physically possible in the course of 24 hours to answer all the correspondence that is addressed to us.

12-10-1933

*
**

THE ADVENT

Constipation is not determined by food; it is due to an inertia in the physical—get off the inertia and the constipation goes.

*
**

It is no use being so active in the mind in the matter of food. It is the body that knows best what it needs. Silence the mind and the vital and learn to feel what the body needs.

*
**

To run about after thoughts or desires cannot be called dhyana. It is a state that has to be rejected—the quiet mind is necessary for dhyana. It is better to remember the Mother than to let the thoughts run away with you.

15-12-1933

*
**

(I often hear voices speaking and replying. That goes on within me, but without myself speaking. How does it happen?)

That is common enough. It is different parts of the mind or else different parts of the being that speak to each other like this. This is sometimes useful for knowing what is in oneself, but only if your central will or else your psychic being uses it to reject the ordinary movements and make the being clear and quiet for the working of the Mother's force.

15-12-1933

*
**

It is a wrong movement of the vital—food has to be taken as necessity for the maintenance of the body and the health.

Those who do not eat and sleep regularly get their nerves weakened and become fanciful and morbid even in their sadhana.

26-12-1933

*
**

One hears all kinds of things when one is in another plane of consciousness. You can meet anybody there or hear anybody's voice.

27-12-1933

*
**

All human beings are full of ego. If you want to change, you must be very quiet and always aspire for a higher consciousness to come down into you in which there is not the ego. When it comes down, the real change will come. But you must be quiet within, not worried and restless—you must open confidently to the Mother's Force and let it work in you.

9-1-1934

*
**

On the forehead is the centre of inner vision. When it is trying to open, there are such flashes.

18-3-1934

*
**

When the Mother gives a flower, she gives the power of the thing it means—if the sadhak is ready or willing to receive it, he can do so.

25-6-1934

*
**

THE ADVENT

Every man has a different smell; also there is a particular smell that goes with different states of the vital physical. Animals (like the dogs) recognise a man and his character by the smell. The human sense has lost this acuteness, but it can be recovered by a development in the sense consciousness. That is what probably has happened in your case. There are others in the Ashram who have the same experience.

7-II-1934

SRI AUROBINDO

THE TEACHING OF SRI AUROBINDO (7)

THE UPANISHADS

*For those who have vision It is even
here in this world.—(Mundaka Up.)*

THE tradition is preserved in the Upanishads. The Upanishads, Sri Aurobindo points out, are not in any sense departures or apostasies from the Veda as is sought to be made out by western scholarship. They are, on the other hand, a continuation of the Vedic tradition. In fact, they represent a successful attempt to revive that tradition long after it had ceased to be a living force. For, with the passage of time a long period did intervene when the Vedic Religion—both the inner esoteric and the outer ceremonial—had exhausted its original impetus and was lost under growths which had little to do with the truth and vision of the founder mystics. It is fortunate that this decay was not allowed to pass into death. After a time, perhaps centuries, a powerful movement for the revival of the true Vedic Religion set in; the Upanishads which form one wing of this movement strove to reestablish the deeper, the spiritual, Knowledge-content of the Veda, while the Brahmanas constituting the other wing attempted to recover the truth and rationale of the symbolism of the ritual of Sacrifice which was the central feature of the external Vedic worship.

The sages of the Upanishads start with the truths intuited by the seers of the Veda and seek to realise them afresh in themselves. Their methods differ in keeping with the different stage of development at which the race mind had then arrived. While the Vedic seer perceived truth in a flash of intuition and proceeded to embody it in himself by a direct and spontaneous reception

of it in his awakened being, the Rishi of the Upanishad took the percept as a starting point and sought to test and make it living to himself principally by means of the cognitive and other mental faculties enlightened by the light of the soul. The luminous mind became the gateway of Knowledge. Yet, he placed the Sruti, the Word of the Veda above his own thought and experience. No perception, no conclusion was valid to him unless it was corroborated and confirmed by the Veda. Time and again, the authors of these texts clinch their teaching saying : so it is declared by Rik, so says the Seer of the Veda etc. Besides, many of the Vidyas, inner Disciplines, in the Upanishads and the truths they are founded upon, stem directly from the Hymns of the Veda. No doubt the sages of the Upanishads did not merely restate the truths embodied in the earlier Scripture. They developed their thought, extended their application and proceeded to illumine with their added knowledge, tracts of being deeper and higher than those covered by their ancestors. Still, their advance was governed by the vision of the ancient Fathers. It is only in the later texts, that a departure is discernible; there is a growing stress on the truth of God to the exclusion of the truth of the world, a tendency which eventually culminated in the shadow of Mayavada, the Doctrine of Illusion. The earlier Upanishads, the major texts hallowed by tradition as the authentic inheritors of the Vedic Legacy, keep the Ideal unclouded and insist on embracing both God and world, Spirit and Life in one harmonising grasp. They hold to the same Knowledge as was revealed to the Seers of the Veda; only it is tested, verified and developed in the larger experience of their Rishis and clothed in a form more suited to the mentality of their later epoch.

And what is that Knowledge ?

II

The sages of the Upanishads look straight into the hard reality of the universe. It is a *creation*, eternal and massive like the

Ashwattha Tree. But its roots are above. From above the Tree spreads wide its branches below. What is here is not self-existent, not self-sufficient. It is based on and continually derives from what is above. And that Above, declare the Vedantic sages, is the Real of the real, *satyasya satya*. It is the Brahman. It cannot be described by human speech. It is simply That, *tad brahma*. This proceeds out of That. Beyond all that is manifest it is the Unmanifest. One cannot say That is this and this; one can only state That is not this, not this, *neti, neti*. And yet, the sages affirm, that is not the final Truth. Beyond both the manifest and the unmanifest, *parāt para*, there is a supreme Purusha,¹ the Transcendent Person of whose Being all else is a Becoming. He is the culmination; there is none higher than Him.

All creation, all Name and Form issue from Him as sparks from Fire, *visphuliṅga iva pāvakāt*. Like the web from a spider the worlds are projected and woven out of Him. Even the Gods are His emanations. The Unmanifest and the Manifest are truly poises—static and dynamic—of this One Supreme Purusha. It is He who has gone abroad and by His Power spread himself, thrown himself out multitudinously. In the cryptic language of the Upanishad, He the One desired to be Many. Desiring, he created out of Himself. Creating, He entered into All. He is the Inhabitant of each Form. All is His Dwelling. Indeed, All this is Brahman alone, all this magnificent Universe, *brahmaiva idam viśwamidam varīṣṭham*.

This is the fundamental truth of existence which the Upanishads enjoin upon every one to recognise and to realise. It is the Truth which gives reality to all existence, universal or individual. Only it stands veiled to man by his ignorance. With the doors of his mind always turned outward, he fails to feel and see the Guest lodged in his own being; so too he fails to recognise the same Inhabitant in those who seem others to him. The Upanishads call upon man to awake to this reality

¹ *avyaktāt tu paraḥ puruṣaḥ*.

of the One who manifests in the Many, to realise his identity with this Self and through it with the rest of his fellow creatures. To realise the One, the Self, the Brahman is to realise what Brahman is. And Brahman, says the Upanishad, is Truth, Knowledge, Infinity, *satyam, jñānam, anantam*.

He is to be known as the Truth, sole and absolute; not only the Truth beyond, but the Truth Here as well. All this is the One Truth in movement with its own Laws and processes, each form in manifestation holding in itself the full knowledge of its purpose. As one gains identity with the supreme Godhead, he grows into this Knowledge. Brahman is endless, infinite. The self-limitations assumed by Him are purposive and in no way affect his Fullness which remains Full even when all the Fulls are taken out of it. He who grows into Brahman, grows also into His Infinity. And Infinity is Joy, Ananda. As Ananda, Bliss, states the Upanishad, is the Brahman to be realised. Ananda is the nature of Brahman; all manifestation is really this Ananda that wells out of His Being for no other purpose than to multiply itself endlessly. Ananda is the secret of all life and he who realises this truth in himself, towards him, verily, all existences yearn.

This is the content of Immortality, *amritattva*, which is the destiny of man in the conception of the Vedantic seers. Immortality to be enjoyed not elsewhere after death, but here and now, while in the body, *ihaiva santah*.

III

The Upanishads not merely declare the Knowledge of Brahman but also show the way to realise it. They propound a number of Sadhanas, inner disciplines, to suit the varying competencies among the seekers. They approach in different ways and arrive through different portals—all to the One Brahman. The most direct path, however, is to seek Him within oneself, deep in the depths. There established in the secret

being, lodged in the cavern heart of things, shines the Self, the Ancient of Days. This Self, the texts declare, is not to be won by eloquent teaching, by great learning, nor by much study. One has to purify the consciousness in all its movements and turn the doors of his perception inward ; with faith and steadfastness the seeker has to plunge deeper and deeper in the recesses of his own being, untie the several knots that cover the Self, separate it from the enmeshing bodies like a fibre from a blade of grass. And, he has to wait upon the Grace. For, it is declared, the Self is not something to be won by effort alone. The Self chooses the recipient of its Grace and only to him whom it chooses does it reveal itself, lay bare its body.

This identity with the Divine Self within is to be effected while one is in the body before it falls. For otherwise great is the perdition. What is in this world, is also in the other. What one is not here, one cannot be elsewhere. You must attain the freedom of the soul and live in it before you are fit for embodiment in the greater worlds of His becoming.

The liberated man does not look to after-life for the fruition of his inner release. On the other hand, he reigns here in the world as the self-emperor, joying in the Self, communing with the Self, radiating the Bliss of the Self. He is no more afflicted by the dualities of Ignorance ; for one who has realised the perfect Knowledge, whence comes delusion ? Whence grief ? What shall he fear ? Where shall he turn ? For to him All is Brahman, All is his own Self. He is one with the creatures around, one with the God in the yonder Sun, one with the Self Eternal. He is Immortal.

M. P. PANDIT

DEMOCRACY, SOCIALISM AND VEDANTA

INTRODUCTION

IN this age of Sputniks, the portent of the moon is so ominous that human civilisation stands at the cross-roads and therefore a time has come for the re-valuation of human ideals. The ascendancy of materialism and science has resulted, in the phraseology of Dr. C. E. M. Joad, in the "dropping of the values of life." Facing total annihilation, we are reminded of the mythological wars between gods and power-maddened Titans. Destiny alone will decide whether gods will be victorious or the titans will be triumphant. According to Professor Hayek, the course of history is largely determined by the life and death of ideals. Thus the main source of change and of the great catastrophes in history is to be found in the free acceptance or rejection of ideas (i.e. Social theories and moral judgements) by the governing groups of the time. Therefore destiny can be often pre-determined by human ideals or dominant ideas in society also.

The two greatest ideals preached and accepted in the West are those of democracy and socialism and the greatest ideal ever preached and accepted in India is that of Vedanta. The salvation of the world lies in a harmonious synthesis between democracy, socialism and Vedanta. Let us consider, in brief, the essential values in Democracy, Socialism and Vedanta.

DEMOCRACY

The shortest definition of democracy has been given by President Abraham Lincoln, who conceived democracy to be "the government of the people, for the people and by the people". According to Garner, "A democratic government is one which is

constituted and administered on the principles that every adult citizen (including both men and women) who is not regarded as unfit by reason of his having been convicted of crime, or in some countries, because of his illiteracy, should have a voice, at least in the choice of those who make the laws by which he is governed, and that his voice should be equal in weight to that of every other elector". Democracy has been variously conceived as both a political status, an ethical concept and a social condition. Thus Giddings treats democracy as not only a form of government but also a form of state, a form or condition of society or a combination of all three. Accepting this broader sense of democracy, Maxey defines it as "A search for a way of life in which the voluntary free intelligence and activity of man can be harmonized and co-ordinated with the least possible coercion, and it is the belief that such a way of life is the best way for all mankind, the way most in keeping with the nature of man and the nature of the universe." According to Professor Smith, the democratic ideal is almost a religious principle. In his words, "It is a practical manifestation of the enthusiasm for humanity. It is a concrete attempt at the reconciliation of the apparently contradictory principles of liberty, equality and fraternity in order that every individual in the community may be enabled to attain the highest good possible for him." But according to C. Delisle Burns, democracy as an ideal is not yet achieved.

Historically political democracy has been associated with the birth of capitalism. By the term capitalism or the capitalist system, or the capitalist civilization, Sidney and Beatrice Webb mean, "The peculiar stage in the development of industry and legal institutions in which the bulk of the workers find themselves divorced from the ownership of the instruments of production in such a way as to pass into the position of wage-earners, whose subsistence, security and personal freedom seem dependent on the will of a relatively small proportion of the nation, namely, those who own and through their legal ownership, control the organisation of the land, the machinery and the labour force of

the community, and do so with the object of making for themselves individual and private gains." The emphasis originally given by Marx, who sought the essence of capitalism neither in a spirit of enterprise nor in the use of money to finance a series of exchange transactions with the object of gain, was on a particular mode of production. By mode of production he did not refer merely to the State of technique, but to the way in which the means of production were owned and to the social relations between men which resulted from their connection with the process of production. Thus capitalism was not simply a system of commodity-production but a system under which labour-power of millions of workers had itself become a commodity and was bought and sold in the market like any other object of exchange. Its historical pre-requisite was the concentration of ownership of the means of production in the hands of a class and the emergency of a property-less class, known as the proletariat.

The greatest defects of capitalism are inequality of income, recurrent trade depressions due to unco-ordinated, unplanned nature of production by innumerable capitalist concerns and the consequent problem of unemployment on a mass scale. The marriage between capitalism and democracy has taken away much of the value of the democratic ideal and political democracy, in the absence of economic democracy, has degenerated merely into ballot-box democracy. To reap the best harvest of democracy, it is necessary that it should now be married to socialism.

SOCIALISM

Karl Marx was the founder of Scientific Socialism as opposed to Utopian Socialism. Engels brought out the distinction between the two. The Utopians were pre-eminently Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen. In the twentieth century Mahatma Gandhi can be said to be the greatest Utopian socialist. In Marx's Communist Manifesto, the reproach directed against Utopian Socialists is the following :—

- (a) They had no knowledge of the Proletariat as such,
- (b) They made their appeal to the whole society, by preference to the ruling classes,
- (c) They dreamed vague and fantastic dreams of a new society,
- (d) They appealed to morality,
- (e) They lacked an objective historical perspective of Class-War. That is they did not have a philosophy of history.

The function of scientific socialism was to reveal socialism as a necessary product of historical development. Given a knowledge of the laws according to which human history unrolls itself, the scientific socialist could show, that the existing capitalist society could not fail to give birth to a socialist order according to the dialectic process of opposition and dynamic change. But Marxian socialism gradually took two forms, viz. revolutionary and evolutionary, according to the respective means to be adopted for social change. Russian Communists, French Syndicalists and Anarchists are all revolutionary Socialists. Russian Communism as interpreted by Lenin has come to be the orthodox school of revolutionary socialism, commonly known as Communism, which stands for a bloody revolution to achieve social change, the dictatorship of the proletariat in the transition stage and the final goal of a Class-less, stateless society. German Revisionists, Guild Socialists and British Fabians are evolutionary socialists, who believe in peaceful and gradual means for achieving social change.

Fabian Socialists have become the most popular school of evolutionary socialists, specially because of the successful formation of the British Labour Party on Fabian theory. It was essentially a middle-class movement at the beginning, rather a movement of the highly intellectual middle-class. It was saved because of the favourable environment in Great Britain for the growth of ideas on democratic socialism and also because in some mysterious way, it attracted to its membership in its early days a number of most remarkable men of their generation e.g., Sidney Web,

Bernard Shaw, Sydney Olivier and Graham Wallas. As to what the Fabians meant by socialism, it is sufficient to say that there was never any Fabian Orthodoxy about principles and they had as flexible a meaning of socialism as Nehru has for the "Socialistic Pattern of Society" in India to-day. To the Fabians, socialism was a logical corollary of democracy: a gradual extension of state activity, and nationalisation of industries for increasing production and reducing inequalities of income and opportunities became the cornerstone of Fabian policy.

According to Sellars, "Socialism is a democratic movement whose purpose is the securing of an economic organization of society, which will give the maximum possible at any one time of justice and liberty." According to the definition given in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th Ed.), "Socialism is that policy or theory which aims at securing by the action of the Central democratic authority a better distribution and, in due subordination thereto, a better production of wealth than now prevails." Thus socialism, now-a-days, generally means Parliamentary Socialism, which is the accepted goal of India also. It should not be confused with Communism. Communism is a vague and distant ideal. It stands for a Class-less stateless society, no doubt, but Russian communism to-day is passing through the so-called transitional phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a totalitarian, authoritarian, collectivist state, which enforces an all-embracing plan through arbitrary administrative decisions. There is no Rule of Law. Civil liberties of a democratic state are conspicuous by their absence in a communist country. Consumers' sovereignty in the market has gone with the wind. In the opinion of Professor Hayek, totalitarian planning leads to the road to serfdom, a regimented life. In the attempt to raise production and remove inequalities of income, human freedom is surrendered. Hence in a future world, crying for freedom and more freedom, intelligent human beings cannot deliberately plan for a new kind of serfdom. Man does not live by bread alone. Man will ever cling to the spiritual values of life. It is true that bread is

necessary for the masses. But bread can be assured to the masses through democratic planning also, provided that modern science and technology are properly utilized in the service of man, instead of for destructive purposes.

Socialism reconciles the values of democracy as well as economic planning. It can achieve social and economic equality without bidding good bye to civil liberties and spiritual values. Socialism utilises the machinery of the state and through the parliamentary process gradually attempts to nationalise land and capital. "From each according to his capacity, to each according to his contribution," is the formula of distribution under socialism. Hence in spite of equal opportunities to all, it guarantees incentives to production in developing economics. Socialism is based on the concept of a functional society where, not birth but merit determines one's place in a society, where though there is some inequality of income, yet great inequalities have been abolished and there are maximum and minimum limits of income. Economic life in a socialist country is essentially planned, but the whole plan is not carried through authoritarian direction. There is rather a harmonious blending or planning through direction and planning through inducement, maintaining a monetary market economy and consumers' freedoms. Socialism subordinates private profit to human welfare. In the transitory period between capitalism and full socialism, the economy assumes the character of a mixed economy, in which both the private as well as public sectors of industry have their relative and properly assigned and co-ordinated roles to play. In a mixed economy like U.K. or France monopoly industries, as found in banking, transport, foreign trade, basic industries etc., are nationalised first and thus concentration of economic power is broken. Even in the mixed economy phase the state endeavours to work out a policy of full employment and an over-all social security policy. Democratic socialism is not only possible and desirable from all points of view, but the dialectic perspective of contemporary world-history inevitably points towards this synthesis of democracy

and socialism. If we re-interpret Marxian dialectics rationally, we shall see that Russian communism, by this time, has already passed from the stage of synthesis to a new stage of a thesis and American democracy has been working as its great anti-thesis since the end of world War II. The new synthesis that is taking shape in Western European countries and in India is that of democratic socialism, in which alone lies the salvation of the human race. Changes in the Soviet set-up since the death of Stalin are very promising indeed and the invention of dangerous inter-continental ballistic missiles, whether of long or of intermediate range, must convince any intelligent man that war has become out-of-date, on the assumption that the human race has to survive. Wisdom now lies in democratising the Soviet economy more and more and in socialising the American economy more and more. If the human race is to be saved from impending total annihilation, the only alternative is that of a World-federation based on democratic socialism for constituent nation-states.

VEDANTA

The analysis so far has made it clear that normatively democracy and socialism can solve the problem of our present civilisation, if we could form a world government. But there lies the hitch. For who is to bring about this world-unity? The actual danger to-day presents itself as a clash between two opposing ideologies, one led by Russia and Red China and on the other side a combination of states, partly capitalistic and partly moderate socialists who still cling with some attachment to the idea of individual liberty. Democracy and socialism as yet lack the cementing force for binding humanity together, as the former is essentially based on individualism and the latter on materialism, which does not recognise the soul of man. World unity and stable peace would be distant ideals without some moorings of a humanistic, monistic philosophy of life. The successor of the U.N.O. must be based on ideological unity. This ideological unity can be offered

only by Vedanta, the cream of Vedic civilisation. The Vedanta is the monistic philosophy of India which vindicates the one-ness and immortality of life, for all life is Brahman itself from the metaphysical point of view.

Of all the systems of Indian Philosophy, the Vedanta as interpreted in the Upanishads and the Bhagavat Geeta and by Shankaracharya has exerted the greatest influence on Indian life. Vivekananda, Tilak, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo have tried in our age to interpret fundamentally the Vedantic view of life in thought and action.

According to the Vedanta philosophy there is one supreme person (Purusha, Purushottama, Paramatma, Parabrahma), who pervades the whole universe and yet remains beyond it. Apparent multiplicity of the phenomenal world is only of pragmatic significance. Metaphysically all existence is one, all souls are but the one immortal blissful soul, Atman, or Brahman. The world originates from the only one Reality (Brahman), rests in it and returns to it when dissolved. From the point of view of ultimate analysis, the reality of the many particular objects perceived in the universe as separate particulars is denied and their unity in the one Reality is asserted ever and again. The Vedanta is an attempt to follow out the Upanishadic idea of the unity of all existence to its logical conclusion. It stands in the history of human thought as the most consistent system of monism. As William James puts it, "The paragon of all monistic systems is the Vedanta Philosophy of Hindustan."

Such a system of course would fail to appeal to those who would turn to philosophy for the justification of their imperfect ideas of worldly distinctions and worldly values. The Vedanta is meant only for the strong-hearted rational human beings who want to achieve an ideal life individually and collectively. For those who value truth, Vedanta has also an emotional appeal. As James puts it, "An Absolute one, and I that one, — surely we have here a religion which emotionally considered, has a high pragmatic value; it imparts a perfect sumptuousity of security."

“We all have some ear for this monistic music : it elevates and re-assures.”

Now it may be objected that Vedanta being the philosophy of Hindu India would not appeal to Christians, Muslims or Buddhists. The reply has been given by Aldous Huxley, according to whom the Vedanta offers a rational explanation of the perennial philosophy underlying all religions of the world. According to him the following four fundamental doctrines are found at the core of Perennial Philosophy, underlying all religions :—

(a) The phenomenal world of matter and of individualized consciousness — the world of things and animals and men and even gods — is the manifestation of a Divine Ground within which all partial realities have their being and apart from which they would be non-existent.

(b) Human beings are capable not merely of knowing about the Divine Ground by inference; they can also realize its existence by a direct intuition, superior to discursive reasoning. This immediate knowledge unites the knower with that which is known.

(c) Man possesses a double nature, a phenomenal ego and an eternal self, which is the inner man, the spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible for a man, if he so desires, to identify himself with the spirit and therefore with the Divine Ground, which is of the same or like nature with the spirit.

(d) Man's life on earth has only one end and purpose : to identify himself with his eternal self and so to come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground.

These four doctrines constitute the Perennial Philosophy in its minimal and basic form. Vedantic Jnana Yoga (the metaphysical discipline of discrimination between the real and the apparent) lays emphasis on these four doctrines and logically explains them.

In the Geeta we find the explanation of the means to achieve the Vedantic ideal of the liberated soul, who has realised the unity of Brahman. To be a “Sthita-prajna” or a liberated soul, one need not give up work and life, but one should give up attachment to life and work. Explaining the fundamental tenet of Karma-

Yoga, as found in the Geeta, Swami Vivekananda speaks, "The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as free beings, to give up all work unto God. There are two ways of giving up all attachment. The one is for those who do not believe in God, or in any outside help. They are left to their own devices; they have simply to work with their own will, with the powers of their mind and discrimination, saying, 'I must be non-attached.' For those who believe in God, there is another way, which is much less difficult. They give up the fruits of work unto the Lord." Though the liberated soul, being perfect, has no end to achieve, it can work still without any fear of further bondage. Shankaracharya, following the Geeta, holds that work fetters a man only when it is performed with attachment. But one who has obtained perfect knowledge and perfect satisfaction, is free from attachment. The liberated man is the ideal of society and his life should be worthy of imitation by the people at large. Liberated men alone should be leaders of mankind and government should be entrusted to them, in order that, they might work for common good alone. Plato's Philosopher King resembles this kind of liberated statesman, found personified in Rama, Krishna, Janaka, etc.

For the common man also the Vedanta is a great source of inspiration and unity. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, "The Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden of all races, all creeds, and all sects, to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads. Aye, this is the one scripture in the world, of all others, that does not talk of salvation, but of freedom." Speaking again about the necessity of a new religion for mankind that can give strength to the common man, Swami Vivekananda asserts, "It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that

we want. And here is the test of truth, — anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison; there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge; truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.” Thus you see, Vedanta is not an “Opiate” to life, as Marx dubbed religion to be. The socialist may find traditional Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam to be a hindrance to social progress but not the Vedanta as explained above. The following view of Swami Vivekananda again will dispel the common misconception about Vedanta that it has a negative approach to life, that it does not encourage social work and social reform. Thus speaks Vivekananda about patriotism for a Vedantist, “I believe in patriotism, and I also have my own ideal of patriotism. Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason ? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots ! Do you feel ? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day, and millions have been starving for ages ? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud ? Does it make you restless ? Does it make you sleepless ? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats ? Has it made you almost mad ? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies ? Have you done that ? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.”

Thus, you see how ennobling and inspiring the Vedanta ideal is for building up a new civilization !

Conclusion :— Our analysis so far has proved that if human civilisation is to survive and if mankind is to evolve towards a

better ideal, we have to build up a world-federation of the economic and political ideals of democratic socialism and on the philosophical ideals of Vedanta. Sri Aurobindo writes in *The Ideal of Human Unity*, — “We conclude then that in the conditions of the world at present, even taking into consideration its most disparaging features and dangerous possibilities, there is nothing that need alter the view we have taken of the necessity and inevitability of some kind of world union; the drive of Nature, the compulsion of circumstances and the present and future need of mankind makes it inevitable.”

But this world union must support a spiritual attitude to life, a divine approach to life, in order that life may find its ultimate goal.

Expounding the ideal of Life Divine on earth, towards which human civilisation has been progressing, Sri Aurobindo writes, “It is, then, this spiritual fulfilment of the urge to individual perfection and an inner completeness of being that we mean first when we speak of a divine life. It is the first essential condition of a perfected life on earth, and we are therefore right in making the utmost possible individual perfection our first supreme business. The perfection of the spiritual and pragmatic relation of the individual with all around him is our second pre-occupation; the solution of this second desideratum lies in a complete universality and one-ness with all life upon earth which is the other concomitant result of an evolution into the gnostic consciousness and nature. But there still remains the third desideratum, a new world, a change in the total life of humanity or, at the least, a new perfected collective life in the earth-nature. This calls for the appearance not only of isolated evolved individuals acting in the unevolved mass, but of many gnostic individuals forming a new kind of beings and a new common life superior to the present individual and common existence. A collective life of this kind must obviously constitute itself on the same principle as the life of the gnostic individual.”

According to the thesis of Sri Aurobindo, the time has come for the descent of the Supramental consciousness on earth in

order that mental life of man may evolve into supramental divine life.

In my opinion this new type of supramental civilisation will bring about a synthesis in which science, democracy, socialism and Vedanta will have found their ultimate culmination. Let us all be torch-bearers of this new truth and aspire for a life divine on a world-scale and make it possible within our life time.

B. GANGULY

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

XI

EDUCATION

NO problem—except, perhaps, that of war and peace—is so acute today, so pressing and yet baffling, as the problem of education. Even the problem of war and peace is so intimately related to that of education that, from one point of view, it can be said that for peace to be permanent, it must be based upon a sound philosophy and system of education. The seeds of war and peace are in men's consciousness, or, as it is roughly put, in men's minds, and not in the outer circumstances of their lives, except in so far as they are allowed to influence their minds; and if their consciousness gets the right type of education, if it grows into a feeling of unity with all, war can well become a thing of the past. Those who make wars today and accentuate the sense of human insecurity are the products of a perverted or short-sighted system of education, which has failed to teach them how to control their desires and passions, how to be freed from the rigid hold of selfish interests and mean ambitions, how to curb the ego and seek their happiness in the happiness and joy of others. It has, on the contrary, nourished in them the sense of competition and conflict, sharpened their sense of separateness from others, turned their lives into a perpetual struggle with their fellow beings, and whetted the instincts of grabbing and possession. If the generation that is rising is judiciously provided with an education which can give it a perception of the fundamental aim of life¹ and of the higher values which can lift it from the corroding obsessions of a mere animal existence, humanity will have taken a long stride forward towards a new order of light and harmony. Indeed, if the world is in a sorry plight today, it is

¹ " Education is not merely acquiring knowledge, gathering and correlating facts; it is to see the significance of life as a whole ".

J: Krishnamurti.

greatly because man has been nurtured on an education which is not only unwholesome to his real being, but exerts a constricting, corrupting and degrading influence upon his nature and life. An extremely narrow, utilitarian, and materialistic outlook has given a wrong direction to his education, divesting it of all idealism and high aspiration, and making it cater only to the gross necessities of his outer life. His inner life, the higher and deeper faculties and the noble qualities of his nature have been left to starve and atrophy, and his soul, his real, immortal being, the potential lord and leader of his life and nature, has been completely neglected. That is why, in spite of multiplying material amenities and comforts which modern science heaps upon him, and in spite of his remarkable intellectual achievements, he is so unhappy, so fretful, so discontented and distracted today ! His inner being, seeking its evolution and fulfilment in life, finds itself almost crushed under the burden of the material preoccupations of his outer nature. The smouldering fire of its discontent, the rankling anguish of its bondage are the secret cause of his growing unhappiness even in the midst of the signal triumphs of his science and civilisation.

What is the remedy ? What kind of education should be given to the rising generation so that the evils of the present system may be left far behind, and a new era of inner illumination and outer harmony may dawn upon earth ?

The education the Mother advocates provides such a remedy. It is a departure from all modern theories in that it does not take man piecemeal, but in his integrality, in the organic wholeness of his complex personality. It addresses itself first to the spiritual centre of his being, the soul, and seeks to develop, integrate and organise the different parts of the being round that ever-living, creative centre. It is a departure also from the ancient Indian system of education inasmuch as it takes full account of the spirit of the modern age, the changed psychological make-up of modern man, and his fundamental needs and aspirations.

If we go behind appearances which are, no doubt, very tangled

and perplexing at the present moment, and probe into the essential urges of the representative modern man, we shall find that there are four things to which his soul aspires with an intensity greater than ever before : 1) some absolute Truth or Being that can at once explain and fulfil the meaning and purpose of human life, 2) unity of mankind, 3) integration of human personality, 4) peace and harmony for its creative self-expression. These are the basic urges, though they are ignored or overlooked by the surface mind of man, and even contradicted by his life and action. Towards the first modern science is steadily advancing in its own way. Its discoveries and inventions are unmistakably tending towards the unveiling of the mystery of existence and the conquest of the supreme Intelligence which is hidden behind the stupendous marvel of the created universe. Its steps are leading it, in spite of itself, as it were, from the material to the immaterial, from the gross to the subtle, from the many to the One. The integrity of its search is prevailing over the errors of its basic postulates. The second, the unity of mankind, has already established itself as a natural and inevitable ideal of the advanced thought of mankind and an imperative of the physical and socio-political conditions created by modern science. It is asserting itself with a force which even the fissiparous tendencies of the dismal present fail to overcome, and it will not cease till it has become a vital element of human consciousness and the firm base of the social relations of mankind. The third, the integration of human personality, is a natural corollary of the urge for unity. It is the same principle of unification become dynamic in relation to the manifold being of man. It has not only been the central problem of modern psychology, but greatly exercised social, cultural, educational and, above all, spiritual thought of the day. Man must no longer remain a cockpit of battling desires and clashing tendencies, but forge all the multiple elements of his nature into an organic, harmonious unity. He must become an integrated being. His perfection must be an integral perfection—perfection of his body, life, mind and soul. His freedom must, therefore, be an integral freedom—freedom

of his body, life, mind and soul. This ideal of integration is an outstanding characteristic of the modern age, and presages a great future for the culture of humanity. It must be made one of the principal aims of education. The fourth, peace and harmony, is a desperate, plangent cry of distressed humanity gaining in pitch and volume as the shadows of war thicken over the earth. This fourfold aspiration of the collective soul of mankind cannot but find its way to fulfilment. The educationist who overlooks it and occupies himself only with the superficial problems of intellectual learning and technical instruction, condemns his method to spiritual and cultural sterility. The recent crazy preoccupation with technical training betokens a lowering of the standard of thought. There is no gainsaying the fact that technology is indispensable if man has to ensure a rich, varied and creative material life on earth, insured against the freaks of Nature; but it must be considered a curse if it seeks to monopolise all human attention and interest to itself, swells into proportions which the limited human mind cannot encompass, enslaves man to the machine, and renders his life unidealistic, unimaginative, earthy and mechanical. The ideal method of education has to deliver humanity from this ogre of mechanomorphism, even while making every allowance for a free growth of technical knowledge.

These are the essential factors which have to be taken into careful consideration in any comprehensive scheme of education, and we shall see, as we proceed, that they have all been woven into the composite texture of the education propounded by the Mother, which is neither eclectic nor syncretic, but integral. But before we launch upon a study of her scheme, it would be both interesting and profitable to point out the main defects of modern education and mention, in passing, some of the salient features of the education which prevailed in the India of the Vedic and Upanishadic times. The Mother's scheme will be best appreciated against the double background of ancient and modern systems of education.

The first and most glaring defect of modern education is

that it is no education¹ at all, for, it does not educe but imposes, it does not evoke the latent powers and develop the subtle faculties of man, but loads his mind with snippets and packets of information. Its motto is learning, not knowledge and wisdom. What it calls knowledge is only a mental and superficial understanding of things. It is a well-known fact that most of the great men of the world have derived very little from the educational institutions; their dormant powers and faculties have developed outside the university routine—in the silence and solitude of their creative thought, in the calm of introspection and deep contemplation. Modern education has standardised curriculums which it imposes upon all students irrespective of their individual bent and aptitude. It defeats its very purpose either by mechanising the intellect of the students and turning them into mere book-worms, or by producing what Rudolf Steiner calls “a generation of proletarians”, equipped with nothing better than the means of “getting on”. There is no effort made to call forth the distinctive qualities of the students and awaken and activate their swabhava, the innate law of their nature.

The second defect of modern education is that it has no sound philosophy at its base. It does not quite know its own mind. It is innocent of any high aim, and has no definite conception of its proper function. It fumbles for an ideal to follow, temporises, straddles between different superficial ideologies, harks back to the humanities, dallies with various new-fangled experiments, and then runs full tilt after practical, utilitarian technology and general mechanisation. Not that philosophy, arts and literature are not taught, but their teaching is also mechanised, brought down from the heights of reflection and imagination to the low lands of matter-of-fact reasoning and analysis.

Modern education does not ask itself what is man, what is the truth of his being and the purpose of his existence,² and what

¹ From Latin “educare”; which means educating or drawing out.

² “Though there is a higher and wider significance to life, of what value is our education if we never discover it?”

J. Krishnamurti.

should be done to equip him for the adventure of life, and enable him to bring out the best of his powers and capacities. It does not seem to enquire whether or not man has a soul, whether or not there is something in him which is central to his being, something which is immortal in his mortal parts. It does not concern itself with the question whether man is really an organic being, evolving from lower into higher states of consciousness and advancing towards some transcendent fullness of knowledge, power and bliss, or only a frail, ephemeral creature, moved by a blind vital energy and aiming at a mastery of physical Nature by the power of his intellect for the enjoyment of his brief, precarious days on earth. It ignores the discords, inner and outer, which vex human life, the unending conflicts between the divergent elements of human nature, and the frictions that take place between man and man, man and his society, and man and nature. It does not care to know whether these discords and conflicts can be resolved, and man can become a harmonious entity at peace with himself and at peace with the world.

In fact, modern education is based not upon any philosophy of life, but upon a colossal ignorance of the intrinsic nature and potentialities of the human material which it presumes to train and enlighten. And the result of this ignorance is that the golden core of this material remains untouched and unawakened; its delicate fibres are left unutilised, even unsuspected; its subtle motor powers untapped; and the chief end of its creation is doomed to frustration. What could have blossomed into a splendour of unearthly beauty is forced into poor moulds of stunted manhood, hardly distinguishable from the animal in its basic instincts and appetites and, more often than not, even in its normal conduct and character. The only distinguishing mark of man is the pale glimmer of his proud intellect.

Since modern education has no philosophy¹ at its base, it has no religion and no morality either to leaven its task. "To

¹ "Philosophic thought in antiquity was the vital centre of liberal education as it has never been for the modern world".

Thomas Whittaker.

know what we want in education", says T. S. Eliot, "we must know what we want in general, we must derive our theory of education from our philosophy of life. The problem turns out to be a religious problem." But religion is taboo in modern culture, spirituality is suspect as mystification, and morality is considered a rusty relic of primitive barbarism, shackling the freedom of man and impeding the growth of his individuality.

The inevitable consequence of having no philosophy, no religion, no spiritual ideal, and no moral discipline at the foundation of education is what is happening today all the world over—indiscipline, immorality, cynicism, pettiness, mean selfishness, and a deadening or collapse of conscience. Students, who are expected to develop patience and forbearance, courage, sympathy, honesty, sweet reasonableness, intellectual integrity, faith and confidence, and, above all, humility and obedience, end mostly by developing the very contrary qualities. It is, indeed, a distressing sight when university students, the hope of the future, run amuck and behave like street Arabs, pelting stones, smashing cars, setting fire to public and private buildings, beating teachers and elders, and indulging, without any thought of self-restraint, the savage impulses of their unregenerate nature. Because the education they receive does not attempt to inspire them with any high idealism, does not develop the nobler side of their nature, does not hold up before them any ideals of moral or spiritual greatness, they are unaware of the Divinity that dwells within them, and take their animal impulses to be the natural movements of their being. They do not pause, in the midst of their orgies of violence and vandalism, to look at themselves and feel ashamed and repentant. They cannot detach themselves from their acts and perceive that it is not the god in them but the unreclaimed beast that leads them and uses them as its tools. It is much easier to appeal to the animal than to the godly elements in man. It is much easier to slip down than climb up in the scale of culture. If education is a means of climbing up the ladder of culture and educating or eliciting the godly elements of human nature, modern education

has failed miserably in its objective. But what better results could be expected from the secular, scientific, materialistic, success-worshipping education that has banished God and soul from its purview, and prides itself on debunking philosophy, religion and morality? If light is wifully shut out, it is idle to complain of darkness.

"By no criterion", says Robert L. Brackenbury in the Year Book of Education for 1957, "can the status of philosophy in the United States be judged high." "These conditions", says Louis Arnaud Reid, in the same Year Book, "in a country like England where philosophy has little prestige, where all but an infinitesimal proportion of university graduates (and therefore lecturers in education) are innocent of even the most elementary knowledge of philosophy—these conditions give little encouragement to students to exercise their minds upon philosophy of education."

An almost universal disregard of the philosophy of education has produced an abundant crop of evils which are too patent to be mentioned in detail. "The teen-agers", writes Karl Hair under the caption "Outward Bound", in the same Year Book of Education, "have become a menace in all European countries and in America. We experience an ugly revolt of adolescents. Their natural longing for 'mastery' refuses to be driven underground; it often breaks all restraints of custom and decency."

In all countries of the world, particularly in America and Europe, child delinquency is alarmingly on the increase. From very tender ages children imbibe ugly habits from the environment, from noxious cinemas and dirty novels. These novels—they are acclaimed as realistic and objective—sell by millions, and fetch fame and fortune to their authors by defiling young minds with the filth and stench of the cess-pools of life. Realism, which has replaced thought and feeling, is a cult of the sensation. It regards life as a tissue of sensations, and its business is to tickle or stir up the sensations of men by presenting to them vivid pictures of all that is ugly and deformed in life. On one side, the school

master is abroad, education is diffused to the lowest strata of society, and the benefits of the most modern methods of teaching are made available to all, irrespective of colour and clime; and, on the other, indiscipline, immorality, indecency, violence, aggressive impudence and savagery are increasing by leaps and bounds among the students everywhere. Nothing that is devised seems to succeed in arresting the evil. And yet the very thing which will, not only arrest but radically cure it, is not attempted at all. The complacent materialism of the modern mind, in spite of the notable progress made in psychology, and parapsychology, cannot bring itself to believe that there is a soul in man, and that it is its awakening and growth that alone can conquer and transform the beast in him and release the god. The soul is the central being in him, the living nucleus of his developing organism. The soul is the potential master of the mind, life and body which it assumes for its divine self-expression, or for the self-expression of the Divine in it. The beast in man will submit only to the control of the soul, and to no other. Man's mind, life and body are already in the grip of the beast in him; and if a ray of unearthly light flashes across his mind for a passing moment, or a wave of emotion leaps up "towards something afar" from the sphere of his empty joys and sorrows, it can be traced only to the infiltrating influence of the soul or the psychic. His soul must, therefore, be roused into fighting the beast. Mental or moral control can have only a partial and uncertain, never a perfect success. Morality is a mental construction, and even its best achievement is but a clumsy compromise with the animal in man. It invariably fails if it sits too tight on the animal...it is like sitting on the crater of a live volcano. Besides, if morality is not founded on religion, that is to say, on a living faith in God, soul, or something eternally free and infinitely pure and powerful, it is quite incapable of enforcing any abiding and effective restraint upon the beast. Atheistic morality tends to degenerate into pretence and hypocrisy. The only radical cure for the aberrations of the teen-agers is to touch the living centre of their being, to awaken the angel

or god in them, and let it pilot their journey through life. The best way of redeeming those who have gone astray is the way of understanding love and affection, the way of silent appeal to their deepest or highest parts. To hold up before their vision exalting ideals of purity and perfection, to provide them with an atmosphere of selflessness and sacrifice, of kindness and benevolence, of courage and confidence, is more helpful than imposing moral rules and principles upon their rebellious spirit. They must be helped to grow in joyous freedom, to breathe a purer air, to see the delivering light within them. Where the didactic method of the pedagogue, the stringent code of the moralist, or the brute system of corporeal punishment fails, a loving appeal to the soul of the delinquent may evoke a ready response. But one must know how to appeal to the soul of another. Only those who have discovered and realised their own soul, can evoke a response from the soul of others. Only those who have a philosophy of education based upon an integral philosophy of life, and who have transcended their lower self and conquered their nature by the power of Spirit, can be ideal teachers capable of drawing out what is noblest and best in their students. Education is much too serious and important a responsibility to be entrusted to mere professional scholars and scientists. The whole life of the student and the destiny of mankind hinge upon it.

In this connection, it will not be going beyond our scope if we cast a hurried glance at the problem of the university students in India.

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

THE LIFE DIVINE

(*An Outline*)

Vol II

CHAPTER XIX

OUT OF THE SEVENFOLD IGNORANCE TOWARDS THE SEVENFOLD KNOWLEDGE.

EVOOLUTION is a heightening of consciousness. Our growth from a mental into a spiritual and supramental manifestation is the new spiritual height and intensity of our consciousness. A change into a higher consciousness is also the whole aim of religion and yoga as well as the secret purpose of life. Life seeks to perfect itself on the planes of mind, vitality and body and also to transform these into means for the conscious spirit to unfold in Nature. Nature labours in us to ascend with all ourself into a higher Principle of being.

We must live on a new height in all our being : the whole of what we are should rise into the spiritual consciousness, for an integral transformation is the aim of the Being in Nature. This heightening brings also a widening and endows a larger field of life with the power of the new principle, and takes up the lower into the higher values. Our mental, physical and vital existence thus become much richer and more perfect.

This evolution and integralisation is a growth out of the sevenfold ignorance into the integral knowledge. In us the ignorance is centered on the unawareness of our total self. We inhabit the plane of Matter, but the predominant principle in our nature is at present the mental intelligence. Because of the

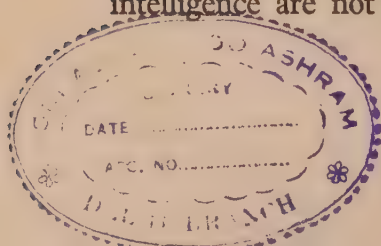
dependence on the sense-mind the mental intelligence is pre-occupied with the material existence or with a materialised vitalism. The first step of our progress is to grow out of this limitation, which is but a limitation of consciousness and a partial knowledge, into the truth of our spiritual being.

If we stop at the sense-mind's knowledge of life and matter we have made no real progress, and only gained a relative and insecure knowledge. The physical objective knowledge is not the one thing which is most needful. We see that physical science cannot itself achieve the fullness of being for man. Only by the true growth of our whole being can we attain true happiness, a mastery of the inner as well as the outer. Therefore we must transcend the material plane by heightening our consciousness. Since we are mental beings we must first liberate our mental selves entering the freer play of our mental existence. This lifts us out of the material and vital absorption but does not yet perfect the nature.

As we rise in the scale of mind, our mental consciousness becomes more powerful and plastic, and we are thereby able to give the vital and physical existence nobler values. While at first man is pre-occupied with his bodily existence, as his mind grows it controls and illumines the life and physicality, and at the same time his mental aims get a value. In this way the mind uplifts and refines and harmonises the vital and physical movements through the instruments of reason, an enlightened will, an ethical perception and an aesthetic intelligence.

This was the ideal put forth by the Hellenic life and culture. But it was later lost and became mixed with a spiritual ideal that was imperfectly understood, and impeded by a vital urge that could not get its free movement. There was the opening to higher ideals and the moral influence, but it could not transform life and eventually the spiritual element dwindled into the present disorder.

A surface mental knowledge and even the largest play of intelligence are not enough for the spiritual evolution. Nor can



the right use of our material existence be discovered through the physical and mechanical processes alone. We must know what is within and behind this, the spiritual principle and spiritual plane of Nature. By that we have to universalise our range of being and our field of action. We can only change our constitutional ignorance by going beyond the lower Nature and learning to use our natural instruments by the force and for the joy of the Spirit. For there is in us a dormant principle beyond mind and closer to the spiritual nature, with more direct powers and luminous instruments. These can become the powers and instruments of our own enlarged nature, since the spiritual principal has to organise its own instrumentation in us. Only then can we conquer the Ignorance.

We have also to conquer the psychological ignorance as well as the constitutional. The psychological ignorance belongs to the knowledge of the superficial, conscient waking self. It is only a half-formulated part dependent on a surface memory and organised by our reason and intelligence. Behind it is the energy of our secret being. In Matter the indwelling Consciousness is secret and not manifested in the inconscient form. In us the consciousness is partly awake, but it moves in a restricted circle, with only occasional intimations from beyond. We have to draw from deeper, wider and higher ranges of our being. Or we must enter into these inner and higher parts of ourselves and bring back their secrets. Or, more radically, we must learn to live within and act from the inner depths and soul.

The subconscious is strictly that part below the level of mind and conscious life, the purely physical and vital elements of our being. It includes the dumb, occult consciousness that operates in the cells, nerves and life process and response, and works below our conscious nature. All past impressions and all that is rejected from the surface mind lie dormant in the subconscious, coming up in dream forms, or mechanical action and suggestion, or vital reaction and impulse. These are used by our waking sense-mind and intelligence which is not aware,

however, of their operation and value. The risings from the subconscious are mostly automatic and involuntary. Only in an abnormal experience do we become aware of this mechanical subhuman physical and vital mind which is the concealed subconsciousence.

We can become aware of the subconscious physical, vital and mental nature only by drawing back into the subliminal or ascending into the superconscient. We have to see the subconscious as the Inconscient in the process of becoming conscious. It is the support of our inferior parts of being, and the retreat of the animal in us. For the integral transformation of our nature, therefore, it is indispensable to bring in light and establish a control there.

There is also the subliminal, that which is intraconscient and circumconscient in us, and includes the inner intelligence, inner sense-mind, inner vital and inner subtle-physical being. This is our real hidden self, of which our surface being is but a selection. This inner being is mediator between the Inconscient and the larger planes of Life and Mind created by the involutionary descent. Much of our surface self is activated by this potent intraconscience.

It is the subliminal that receives the currents from the universal mind, Life and Matter—forces, and tunes them into formations that affect our existence unknown to us. Thus we could control our present mind energies and life action if we penetrate the separating wall between the inner existence and the outer self. Eventually we have to live within, in the inner mind and life and inmost soul. By this and by rising to a higher plane of mind we can enlarge and complete our present evolutionary status.

The superconscience includes the higher planes of mental being as well as the supramental and pure spiritual being. We must first, therefore, elevate our consciousness into the higher parts of Mind from which we already receive revelatory, inspirational and intuitive movements. If we can reach these mental

heights something of the power of the spirit, even of supermind, can intervene in the actions of the lower being and help to remould it. By this remoulding we could rise into the supramental and spiritual nature. At first by openness to them and reception of their knowledge and influences we can get rid of our constitutional and psychological ignorance, and thus spiritualise partially our human life and consciousness, and be guided by these enlightening forces. This is only a preliminary stage; for the integral self-knowledge is an ascent beyond the normal mind, and this is possible in an absorbed superconscience. But it is also necessary for this highest spiritual being to be brought into our waking life, a taking up of our present being and activities, and transmuting them into divine values. This triple movement—*ascent, widening of the field, and integration*—is in fact Nature's method of self-transcendence.

This evolutionary change must be associated with the rejection of our temporal ignorance. At present we only live from movement to movement and in a bodily life between a single birth and death. We are limited by our physical memory. This temporal consciousness is clearly dependent on our preoccupation with the material plane and life. But this limitation is a temporary stage, a first working of our manifested nature. This condition goes contrary to our belief in the immortality of our inner being, and it is when we live in the consciousness of our immortality that we can come to the true self-knowledge of our being in time and of our timeless existence.

Immortality does not mean a personal survival of the bodily death; the spirit's timeless existence is the true immortality. It is a natural consequence of our timelessness that our temporal existence is continued from life to life and from world to world, after the dissolution of the body. We must realise the timeless and changeless spirit within us by the knowledge of the *Non-becoming*; and the realisation of our time immortality comes by knowledge of the *Becoming*. This latter is the timelessness translated into Time manifestation. By the knowledge of both our

timelessness and our manifestation in Time we are able to possess freely the experiences of the spirit in its successions of time — eternity. Only by living consciously in eternity are we able to govern the course and process of the becoming. This means a withdrawal from, but not a neglect of our absorbing material pre-occupation, and our living on the inner and higher planes of the mind and spirit. By this ascent and stepping back inwards we grow out of our transient life into the immortal existence. This results in a consciousness centred on the eternal spirit which acts through a continuous soul-life that perpetually develops its activities through a successive physical existence. Only then are we masters of our nature, subject to the Divine within us.

We also get rid of our egoistic ignorance. The ego is a falsification of our true individuality, a separation from other souls which shuts us up in our own individual experience, and a separation from God and our highest Self. As our consciousness enlarges, the ego cannot survive. The being becomes universal, identified with the spirit, life, mind and body of all beings; or it reaches the eternity of self-existence independent of the cosmic or individual. This disappearance of the ego does not bring with it the destruction of our true individuality. There is a transformation which replaces the separative ego by the conscious figure of the universal being and transcendent Divine.

There also ensues a dissolution of the cosmic ignorance, since we realise ourselves as timeless in cosmos and beyond, as part of the Divine play in time. Thus discovering the Divine in the universe, we can approach the Absolute as the source of all relations, and by this knowledge uplift the conditions of the world. Our practical ignorance of wrong-doing, suffering and falsehood will then give way to the divine values of the Consciousness-Force and Ananda. The requisite conditions are union with God, unity with all things and a life governed from within outwards, through which the Divine law can act, and not the ignorance.

A transformation of the Ignorance into the divine life of the truth-conscious spirit is the result of the conscious spiritual evo-

lution, a change from the mental into the supramental way of being. This expression of the spiritual principle in cosmic and individual existence would be the natural completion of the upward process of Nature, where all is transformed into a conscious manifestation of the Spirit.

N. PEARSON

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE FUTURE OF THE STATE

MATERIALIST THEORY OF EVOLUTION

THE materialists of the nineteenth century built up a theory of evolution on the foundation of contemporary science. The four cornerstones of this philosophy were (a) nebular theory of the universe, (b) atomic theory of physics, (c) theory of evolution of species in biology and (d) behaviourist psychology. Out of the astral nebula evolves a system of stars and planets by discharge of heat. A planet favourable to life appears in the process of cooling. Here the germ of life springs out of an accidental chemical and thermal combination. It multiplies and ramifies into species under the pressure of natural environment till the more advanced among them develop a nervous system. The nerves are stimulated by things and events outside which are all mobile atoms. The nerve cells of the brain move, the glands secrete and men think, feel and act. Thus sensible universe, life and mind all resolve into matter and material motion.

The discoveries of the twentieth century have shattered every link of this chain. New astrophysics found that the dissipation of energy in the form of heat is a phenomenon to which no origin is traced and which is not apparently counterbalanced by any process of accumulation. In atomic physics the hard indivisible ball gave way to positive and negative charges and waves of imponderable energy. Laboratories failed to demonstrate that protoplasm is a chemical compound. The theory of an all-pervading struggle for existence among the biological species determining their evolution was discarded and it was found that cooperation, mutuality and fellow-feeling play a more prominent part in their

survival. It was also discovered that the species bifurcated not only by accumulating gradual changes but sometimes with sudden big variations called mutation which is not explained by the hypothesis of adaptation to environment. The theory that thought is the physical behaviour of brain cells stimulated by material events is self-defeating. Because by its own argument it becomes a record of events determined by laws of physics and chemistry and not a proposition based on the laws of logic.

Thus the idea of an obvious superficial machinery and all-sufficient material necessity yields to profundities whose mysteries are yet to be unravelled. The collapse of the materialist theory calls for a new interpretation of evolution. If it is not indeterminate matter promoting itself into higher forms of existence under the mechanical impulsion of the force of Nature, what is the principle underlying these progressive manifestations ?

EVOLUTION: ASCENSION OF SPIRIT

The answer of Sri Aurobindo is that evolution is not physical but spiritual. It is a ladder of ascension from an original apparent Inconscience to a clearer and clearer consciousness destined to unpredictable heights. The Inconscient is only apparently so. It is the involved consciousness with endless possibilities, the Divine concealed and imprisoned in matter holding every potentiality in its unfathomable depths.

“Each potentiality is revealed in its turn, first organised Matter concealing the indwelling Spirit, then Life emerging in the plant and associated in the animal with a growing Mind, then Mind itself evolved and organised in Man.”¹

At every stage an immediately higher principle or power,

¹ *The Riddle of This World*. Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, 1933. P. 96

the superconscient descends to create a new level and to lift the terrestrial from the existing plane. Matter does not evolve into life : life is produced out of matter by a life principle descending down to it and imposing its laws and necessities upon the conditions of matter. Mind appears out of life by the descent and working of a mind principle upon the vital plane.

This spiritual ascent cannot stop in the imperfect mental being which man now is. There must be a higher consciousness than mind, a superconscient knowledge to lift the mind to its own level, to recreate it with its own laws.

“By ascending the ladder still farther we can find a point at which the hold of the material Inconscience, the vital and mental Ignorance ceases; a principle of consciousness becomes capable of manifestation which liberates not partially, not imperfectly but radically and wholly this imprisoned Divine.”¹

Thus a great future lies before man. He is to grow into the superman with supramental knowledge and a life divine. This is the coming phase of the spiritual progression, progressive revelation of the Spirit, which is the truth of evolution. The first vibration of the living cell was a signal to the march of animal life to an endless diversity. The spark of reasoning in the first anthropoid who made the weapon of stone was a foretaste of the scientific brain of the modern man. The coming age of the supermind has similarly cast its shadow in the mystical revelations of saints and seers. But they have had only glimpses of it, they have ascended individually to the supermind. They have not brought it down to the earth. The future will see the double movement of ascent and descent. The Spirit will descend on the earth, cast itself on the physical mould, transmute the species in its own image and lift it on a higher plane.

¹ *The Riddle of This World.* P. 96f:

The process is the Yoga. The Yogin is the medium of the descent. He goes in quest of the Spirit. But his object is man, the human race.

STAGES OF SOCIAL EVOLUTION

In human society also there is a spiritual progression analogous to the evolution in physical and biological nature. For the Spirit is seeking its fullness in humanity in time and on earth. It manifests itself in a people as a communal soul which is the vehicle for its further unfoldment. In each people there is a soul idea or life idea at work which determines its longevity. A people is an organic living being going through the cycle of birth, growth and decline. But unlike a biological organism, the collective organism has the capacity to renew itself and start along a new cycle. If its soul or life idea is sufficiently strong and elastic, capable of constant enlargement, living not solely on its physical and outward life but in the Spirit behind from which it draws its existence, then the people will not exhaust itself and dissolve under the impact of new races.

Taken as a whole, human society has to pass through three stages of evolution before it can reach the fullness of its possibilities. At the first stage it lives in the vital plane. It is not yet intelligently self-conscious. Its growth, its customs, institutions and activities are a natural organic process arising out of the subconscious principle of life within, not fashioned with a deliberate purpose but determined partly by an internal impulse to serve a vital or physical need and partly by the pressure of environment acting upon the communal mind. This stage is seen in early tribal polity and among most of the ancient and medieval communities whose social order was regulated more by conventional rules than by laws of the State.

At the second stage society steps higher on to the intellectual plane. The communal mind becomes intellectually conscious of itself. It reviews its ideas, needs and institutions and rectifies

them with critical and constructive reasoning. With its exact and scientific knowledge it acquires a high efficiency in the planning and modelling of society. It is also imbued with higher social and political ideals which promise to raise the community beyond the plane of vital existence, beyond the customary moulds of needs and desires and inspire bold experiments with the communal life which open up the possibility for the realisation of a better society. This application of the scientific mind to life with its "strict, well-finished, armoured efficiency", this conscious pursuit of great social and political ideals and the phenomenal progress made in the endeavour, have been, with whatever limits and drawbacks, the distinctive advantages of the political and social effort of Europe.

The second stage opens up great possibilities of progress. It is, nevertheless, attended with a serious danger. Reason, working upon the materials of life as its absolute governor, forgets that society is a living growth and begins to treat it as a machine which can be manipulated according to the arbitrary dictates of intelligence.

"The sophisticating, labouring, constructing, efficient, mechanising reason loses hold of the simple principles of a people's vitality; it cuts it away from the secret roots of its life. The result is an exaggerated dependence on system and institution, on legislation and administration and the deadly tendency to develop, in place of a living people, a mechanical State. An instrument of the communal life tries to take the place of the life itself and there is created a powerful but mechanical and artificial organisation; but, as the price of this exterior gain, there is lost the truth of life of an organically self-developing communal soul in the body of a free and living people."¹

¹ *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*. Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, 1947. P.25

This error, the exaggeration of scientific reason, stifling the urge of the vital and spiritual under the dead weight of its mechanical method, has arrested the progress of Europe and deceived her aspirations.

Society will get rid of this error when it arrives at the third stage of evolution, and lives in the spiritual plane.

“When man in the collectivity begins to live more deeply and to govern his collective life neither primarily by the needs, instincts, intuitions welling up out of the vital self, nor secondarily by the constructions of the reasoning mind, but first, foremost and always by the power of unity, sympathy, spontaneous liberty, supple and living order of his discovered greater self and spirit in which the individual and communal existence have their law of freedom, perfection and oneness.”¹

At this stage reason acts as an intermediary, as an ordering and regulating principle. It is used to test and assure the steps, not to guide the progress, to aid but not to replace the life and the spirit—“always the true and sound constructors”. The right conditions in which such a society can thrive are not yet. It will come only when spiritual existence is no longer the aim of exceptional individuals, nor is degraded in collective aspiration to the form of a popular religion but when it is recognised and followed as an imperative need of the human being and as the next step in the evolution of the human race.

LARGER AND LARGER AGGREGATES

Association is the first necessity of human survival. The life of man begins in the group. He goes on to live in larger and larger aggregates. Aristotle also saw this process,—from family

¹ *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity*. P. 26

man proceeded to unite in the village and from the village into the *polis* which he believed to be the perfect aggregate for the realisation of a good life. With Sri Aurobindo the process does not end with the city state. After the tribe or city comes the clan, the *gens* and then the nation. At present the nation, like the old *polis* or the clan, is a psychological unit gifted with a communal mind, "a living collective unit of humanity". This group, in its turn, is destined to be surpassed by a larger aggregation, viz., mankind.

In the ancient world the city states were disunited parts of a geographical and cultural unity. When they came to live in a wider sphere of interdependence they were welded together by kings and conquerors to form the larger groups called nations which became the basis of the centralised State. The national State grows by developing a central authority and by forging uniformity in administration, legislation, social and economic life and culture. The central authority becomes the determining power. At first this authority is vested in a man or in a class. In course of time it is wielded by a body which is supposed to represent the will of the community. At this stage society moves from the vital to the intellectual plane. A natural and organic society becomes a mechanically organised State. A loose and natural unity gives way to an intelligent centralised unification, variety yields place to uniformity.

"The intelligent will of the whole society expressed in a carefully thought-out law and ordered regulation replaces its natural organic will expressed in a mass of customs and institutions which have grown up as the result of its nature and temperament. In the last perfection of the State, a carefully devised, in the end a giant machinery productive and regulative, replaces the vigour and fertility of life with the natural simplicity of its great lines and the obscure, confused, luxuriant complexity of its details. The State is the masterful but arbitrary and intolerant science and reason of man

that successfully takes the place of the intuitions and evolutionary experimentations of Nature; intelligent organisation replaces natural organism.”¹

STATE : THE COLLECTIVE EGO

Theoretically, the State is the collective wisdom and force of the community organised for the purpose of securing collective good. Actually, it is the collective egoism of the nation controlled by politicians who represent less its idea and will than its selfishness and incompetence. Far from bringing out the best that the community is capable of, it throws up a great deal of folly, pettiness and organised blundering and obtains acquiescence in its calculated sham by means of propaganda. Unlike the individual ego the collective ego is without a soul and has, at best, an undeveloped ethics. With the largest amount of power, it is not hampered by internal scruples or by external checks. In relation to other States, it was “a huge beast of prey” even a few years ago; and if now there is some improvement, it is not because of any essential change but due to the difficulty of devouring a prey.

The State is not an organism. It is a machine. Like a machine, it works “without tact, taste, delicacy and intuition”.

“It is incapable of that free, harmonious and intelligently or instinctively varied action which is proper to organic growth.”²

It tries to manufacture, not to create. Whatever it lays its hands on, it subjects to a mechanical system. If it controls education it is reduced to routine instruction at the cost of true individual development. The State always strives for uniformity because that is easy to its mechanical nature. But for a living community uniformity is death.

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1950. P. 232f.

² *Ibid.* P. 27

The urge of humanity is to live, grow and create. This has always been the work of the individual, not of the group.

“Always it is the individual who progresses and compels the rest to progress. The instinct of the collectivity is to stand still in its established order. Progress, growth, realisation of wider being, give his greatest sense of happiness to the individual; status, secure ease, to the collectivity. And so it must be as long as the latter is more a physical and economic entity than a self-conscious collective soul.”¹

The State appears at its worst when it applies its collective conservatism and imbecility to actively suppress the creative individual. Even a democratic state is not free from this dangerous propensity. On the contrary, the democracies of today have embarked on an organised annihilation of individual liberty such as could not be dreamed of in the old aristocratic and monarchical States. It does not take such violent and brutal forms as were usual under despotic systems. But it is nonetheless effective and all-pervading in the form of a tyranny of the majority over the minority and of a hysterical mass over the constituent groups and units.

Still the State has been a necessary element in the history of man. It has been a means to co-operation and solidarity for material progress. Its function is to open avenues for that purpose and to remove obstacles from the way. The state has served this historical utility and discharged a more or less negative function. It has provided the outward form to the collective psychological unit of the nation. But it is not the suitable frame for the unity of mankind which is the next phase in social evolution.

(to be continued)

ATINDRANATH BOSE

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1950. P. 29

REVIEW

Communication, Organization, and Science: By *Jerome-Rothstein*. Foreword by C. A. Muses. The Falcon's Wing Press, Colorado; 1958. Pp. xcvi and 110. Price \$ 3.50.

This is a fine little book written in an attractive style with the subject matter valuably and challengingly presented. The author has based his work on a greatly generalized concept of entropy, or rather of its negative counterpart 'neg-entropy', in an attempt to integrate many different fields of thought and deduce in this process certain conclusions that are as original in their conception as they are far-reaching in implication.

It was Boltzmann who first linked up the concepts of probability (P) and entropy (S) through his famous formula: $S = K \cdot \log P$, and thus created a bridge between Statistics and Thermodynamics. Because of its characteristic property for a thermodynamically closed system, entropy was later described as a measure of disorder, randomness, or chaos.

In recent years, in course of their researches on the theory of Communications, Messrs Hartley, Wiener and Shannon generalized the term entropy, or rather 'negative entropy' ('neg-entropy' of Leon Brillouin), and used it as a measure of the amount of information. This unexpected analogy between 'entropy' in thermodynamics with its sign reversed and 'information' in the theory of transmission evoked a great deal of interest in the circle of theoretical physicists. Meanwhile Norbert Wiener pointed out in his *Cybernetics* that negative entropy and the organized activity of biological entities possess more than a superficial relation and interconnection.

Jerome Rothstein, the author of the title under review, greatly enlarges upon and specifies this observation by Wiener, fruitfully introducing measurement, communication, and a generalized conception of organization into the discussion in manifold ways. He first stresses the analogy between measurement and communication and shows that they have the same underlying logical structure. He then links up information to statistical entropy, thus establishing a measurement-information-entropy relation. Finally, he generalizes still further the scope of entropy to make precise the concept of organization and goes on to show that organization is essentially a negative entropy just as information is. As a matter of fact, he purports to demonstrate that a generalized conception of organization lies behind all manifestation of negative entropy from biological activity on to the field of scientific theory and aesthetic creation.

Some of the consequences of this information-organization viewpoint as espoused in this book are indeed very interesting. Thus, Rothstein holds that the essence of all originality or creativity is the introduction of organization into suitable ensembles; the sentences we frame display organization mirroring the relationships they describe; art, too, is not only communication, but organization; all skills are organized segments of experience; the function of a theory is to organize observation, the simplest theory corresponding to the highest degree of organization; and "an important function religions perform for an adherent is to relate him to the universe and so to give him an inner security lacking in one who feels he is like a helpless cork aimlessly tossed by a blind tempest. In short, religion organizes him and his universe (p. 58)."

The topics covered in this volume are vast and varied. The author has tried to shed some new light on such old problems as free will versus determinism, collective order versus individual freedom, Spirit and Matter in their mutual relation, etc. He shows himself to be remarkably original in seizing upon Kurt Goedel's famous theorem and bringing in time and again the

concept of the "Goedelian leap-frog" in an attempt to dissolve many of the antinomies that have ever plagued human thought.

Evidently, in a work of this pioneering nature one may come across a number of statements that betray not so much truth as the exuberance of an excited *avant-garde*, as when Mr. Rothstein declares enthusiastically on pp. 77-78 : "Models of living behavior are also possible....It is clear that one can construct robots as perfect as one wants. But some may feel unsatisfied that a machine can ever be built which can learn, reproduce itself, create a new concept, write poetry, fall in love, and so on. We reply that if these things can be defined, they can be realized in a machine, if the machine is sufficiently complicated....Values can be built into a machine. Co-operation, competition and other quasi-societal interactions between machines are possible for machines endowed with values and capable of playing games or seeking goals"; or when he asserts his belief that "these powerful extensions of the entropy concept make biology understandable in principle on physico-chemical grounds (p. xcii)"; or when he tries to explain away the origin of life in the following terms : "Aeons of entropy increase of the universe paid for organizing a tiny fraction of the earth's mass into continually more and more complex configurations. This high degree of organization of some matter was ultimately able to spread by interacting with unorganized matter in its environment, impressing a similar degree of organization on it (at the expense of entropy increase elsewhere in the universe, of course). We can call this stage the origin of life." (p. 79)

But the question is, are Life and Mind no more than inconspicuous epiphenomena of a material organization, or rather is it not Life and Mind that have created through their secret pressure a particular type of material organization as a fit vehicle of their special manifestation. As a matter of fact, Life and Mind are not lesser but greater powers than Matter, they can never be adequately explained in terms of physico-chemical laws alone. Even if science comes someday to unveil the circumstances attend-

ant on the origin of life, or on the manifestation of mind, it will then do no more than 'explain' the mechanism, the 'how' of the phenomena, the 'why' will remain as mysterious as ever. To adapt Mr. C. A. Muses' felicitous expression, the 'existence theorem' will then probably be known, but the 'reason theorem' will still be lacking. It is interesting to note in this connection that great scientists like Louis de Broglie and Leon Brillouin have the imagination to suggest that, perhaps in future, the laws of life will be proved to be the more general laws of which the laws governing the world of inanimate matter are nothing but particular degenerate forms obtained through the suppression of a parameter. In reality, as the Rig Veda says, the true foundation is above while the branchings are downward. Thus, to know the essential truth of things as distinguished from their phenomenal appearance, one has to probe upward and inward and, for that matter, change the complexion of the present-day science.

But, to take a broader view of the situation, this type of reductivist assertion does not after all matter much, nor does it detract from the great value of Rothstein's work. For what is of real worth in a work of this pioneering nature is a new spirit of inquiry that tries to look at reality with a new pair of eyes unhindered in their vision by prejudices of the past; and so long as this spirit is maintained, science is bound to evolve and take on in its forward march a new hue. In spite of his occasional wanderings into the mood of reductive-omissive fallacy, this new spirit, a spirit of humility before the 'complex harmonies of the universe', and a sense of something other than 'material' sustain the work of Rothstein as an undercurrent. For does he not declare with commendable frankness that "because of the fuzziness of our pictures of the world imposed by observational limitations and the finiteness of our experience, there will always be an infinity of theories compatible with known data, and probably an infinity of kinds of idealized brick out of which to build them. I think that habit often welds us to accepted idealizations so tightly that it is hard to think in other terms.... But I hope never to be

so foolish as to think there is absolute or ultimate truth (whatever that may mean) in the approximate pictures we construct, or that the partial patterns we perceive are more than murky images of that harmonious whole" (p. xc).

And, significantly enough, his book concludes with this utterance : "Each synthesis seems to open the door to a higher kind of experience, which in turn permits higher syntheses. In spite of the solid 'material' or 'mechanical' basis of our discussion, there was always something eluding mechanical description. It is in this something that we can find an *élan vital*, the spiritual, the Divine, if we are so inclined. The act of creation, which is the heart of a new synthesis, partakes of this nature if anything does. It is therefore a deep insight that the very first sentence of the Old Testament sets forth the power of creation as a divine attribute. Love also partakes of this nature and religion has long known this too. May not this progress to ever higher levels reach what religious insight might call the coming of a Messianic or the establishment of God's kingdom on earth?" (pp.109-110).

In a brilliantly written Foreword covering some ninety pages, Mr. C. A. Muses notes down the preliminary findings of his researches into the structure of time. This analysis of time itself, this science of *Chronotopology* as Mr. Muses styles it, is projected to have in its scope "the topological (not excluding quantitative relations) and most generalized analysis of the temporal process, of all time series...the study of the intra-connectivity of time (including the inter-connectivity of time points and intervals), the nature or structure of time" (p. xii). As a matter of fact, of the nature and structure of time itself investigations have been all but silent. As with many other problems lying at the foundations of our thought and procedures, it has been taken for granted and thereby neglected. Time and Space have been almost taken to be neutral canvas on which phenomena are taking shape, and it has been so far tacitly assured that these latter can be very well studied and their laws investigated quite independently

of Space and Time. But C. A. Muses thinks otherwise and starts with the brilliant stroke of intuition that it is the intrinsic nature of Time itself that is at the basis of the particular type of natural phenomena that we come across in our human experience, and therefore "no longer is it enough simply to take time for granted and merely apportion and program it in a rather naively arbitrary fashion. Time must be analyzed, and its nature probed for whatever it may reveal in the way of determinable critical probabilities." (p. xii)

Some of the results obtained through this chronotopological analysis and as recorded in this book are indeed very interesting. Equally interesting is Mr. Muses' sweeping synthetic grasp that seeks for and finds a common topological structure underlying phenomena apparently bearing no mutual relation and belonging to widely different domains. This Foreword provides ample food for thought and is bound to repay perusal.

The book under notice is nicely got up and the printing leaves nothing to be desired.

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